

Purpose and Need

Grapevine & Sycamore Springs Pipelines

Payson Ranger District

Date: May 22nd 2018

ID Team Leader: Kelly Bedson

Project type: Structural Range Improvement

Target start date: June 2018

Target finish date: June 2018

Expected NEPA Documentation Type: Categorical Exclusion (DM required)

If Categorical Exclusion, select Category: 32.2 (9) Implement or modify minor management practices for range allotment when no allotment mgmt plan

Project location: This project is located on the Pine & Hog Canyon allotments grazing allotment of the Payson Ranger District, north and south of Payson, AZ. The legal location of the project is Township 11N, Range 9E, and Section 2; Township 11.5N, Range 9E, and Section 35; and Township 9N, Range 10E, and Section 3, 4, 9, 10, 16

Vegetation type: Vegetation in this area consists of pinyon-juniper grassland with heavy components of scrub oak, manzanita, and catclaw

Existing Condition

The Pine & Hog Canyon allotments are grazed in a rest-rotation system. With the current dry conditions, earthen stock tanks have dried up and the permittee has been removing livestock and hauling water. In order to provide adequate distribution of livestock additional water sources are needed in the Gilmore, Hog Canyon, and Cedar Mesa pastures.

Desired Conditions

As described in the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan on replacement page 42 standards and guidelines state that a minimum of four waters per section and one water per section in big game key areas should be provided. In management area 4F livestock should be managed at Level D. Level D management for livestock includes:

Management seeks to optimize production and utilization of forage allocated for livestock use consistent with maintaining the environment and providing the multiple use of the range. From all existing range and livestock management technology, practices may be selected and used to develop cost effective methods for achieving improved forage supplies and uniform livestock distribution and forage use... Cultural practices may be combined with fencing and water developments to implement complex grazing systems and management methods.

The Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan states that rangeland in less than satisfactory condition will be treated with improved grazing management along with the installation of structural and non-structural improvements (page 195). Also to develop structural improvements in association with allotment management plans (AMP) to maintain utilization at levels appropriate with management intensity and AMP objectives.

Current Management Direction

An AMP for the Pine & Hog Canyon grazing allotments was signed in 2016. This management plan indicated that water distribution is an ongoing issue on the allotment. With the current drought conditions, additional water is needed to accommodate the dry dirt stock tanks and adequately distribute cattle throughout the pastures to make best use of available forage.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to evenly distribute cattle while on in the Gilmore, Hog Canyon, and Cedar Mesa pastures of the Pine and Hog Canyon grazing allotments and provide the livestock with additional reliable water sources for when dirt stock tanks go dry. The need is to comply with direction found in the Tonto National Land and Resource Management Plan and to move the allotment towards our desired conditions.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action consists of two project areas:

The Forest Service proposes to install a springbox at Sycamore Spring. From here 0.28 miles of 1" polyethylene pipeline that will be laid above ground by hand, traveling west and ending in a trough. Along the route a storage container and pump will be placed on the surface.

In addition, the Forest Service proposes to clean an existing springbox at Gilmore Spring. From here 1.7 miles of 1" polyethylene pipeline that will be laid above ground by hand, traveling south and ending in a trough. Along the route a storage container, additional trough, and pump will be placed on the surface.

Design Features

The pipeline will be laid above ground. Work installing and/or cleaning springbox will be done using hand tools. The troughs will be required to have a usable wildlife escape ramp and a functioning float.

Implementation Timeline:

Implementation is expected to begin summer 2018.

Please send your questions, concerns, or mitigations to:

Kelly Bedson
Range Management Specialist
Payson & Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts
1009 E. Hwy 260, Payson, AZ 85541
kellypbedson@fs.fed.us